

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

JOINT RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS TORCH RELAY

WHEREAS, the Chinese communist regime has been granted the honor of hosting the 2008 Olympics in Beijing with the provision that the nation improve its treatment of Chinese citizens; and

WHEREAS, human rights violations have increased in China since this honor was granted; and

WHEREAS, the Chinese regime imprisons millions of Christians, Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims, Falun Gong, democracy advocates, labor organizers, lawyers, journalists, environmental activists, political dissidents and other innocent citizens in slave labor camps without trial; and

WHEREAS, the Chinese regime illegally harvests vital body organs for sale without consent from Falun Gong prisoners of conscience; and

WHEREAS, the Chinese regime continues to occupy Tibet and attempts to erase the cultures of Tibetans and Muslim Uighurs; and

WHEREAS, the Chinese regime forces women to get abortions, even in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy, to enforce the "one child per family" rule; and

WHEREAS, the Chinese regime supports the dictatorships in Sudan, Burma, Zimbabwe and North Korea in perpetuating slaughter upon their citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Chinese regime prohibits freedom of religion, and those who practice their faith and beliefs in underground churches are arrested, imprisoned and persecuted; and

WHEREAS, the Chinese regime prohibits freedom of speech, controls the population with private and public surveillance and censors information on the Internet; and

WHEREAS, the Chinese regime prohibits freedom of the press and imprisons more journalists and reporters than any country in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Olympic Charter calls for the Olympic Games to represent "respect for universal fundamental ethical principles" and "the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity." It states that: "Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or other reason is inconsistent with membership in the Olympic Movement"; and

WHEREAS, the Human Rights Torch Relay is an international campaign that seeks to bring an end to all human rights abuses against the people of China and is dedicated to ending human rights abuses by the Chinese communist regime, to reestablishing the mandate of the Olympic Charter and to preserving the true Olympic spirit; now, therefore, be it

That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-third Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, declare our support for

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the Human Rights Torch Relay campaign and proclaim April 2008 to be Human Rights Torch Relay Month; and be it further

That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be displayed at the office of the Secretary of State on behalf of the people of Maine.